

packaging, is neither relevant nor available to consumers.

Example 4: The president of a commercial “home cleaning service” states in a television advertisement that the service uses a particular brand of cleanser in its business. Since the cleaning service’s professional success depends largely upon the performance of the cleansers it uses, consumers would expect the service to be expert with respect to judging cleansing ability, and not be satisfied using an inferior cleanser in its business when it knows of a better one available to it. Accordingly, the cleaning service’s endorsement must at least conform to those consumer expectations. The service must, of course, actually use the endorsed cleanser. Additionally, on the basis of its expertise, it must have determined that the cleansing ability of the endorsed cleanser is at least equal (or superior, if such is the net impression conveyed by the advertisement) to that of competing products with which the service has had experience and which remain reasonably available to it. Since in this example, the cleaning service’s president makes no mention that the endorsed cleanser was “chosen,” “selected,” or otherwise evaluated in side-by-side comparisons against its competitors, it is sufficient if the service has relied solely upon its accumulated experience in evaluating cleansers without having to have performed side-by-side or scientific comparisons.

Example 5: An association of professional athletes states in an advertisement that it has “selected” a particular brand of beverages as its “official breakfast drink”. As in Example 4, the association would be regarded as expert in the field of nutrition for purposes of this section, because consumers would expect it to rely upon the selection of nutritious foods as part of its business needs. Consequently, the association’s endorsement must be based upon an expert evaluation of the nutritional value of the endorsed beverage. Furthermore, unlike Example 4, the use of the words “selected” and “official” in this endorsement imply that it was given only after direct comparisons had been performed among competing brands. Hence, the advertisement would be deceptive unless the association has in fact performed such comparisons between the endorsed brand and its leading competitors in terms of nutritional criteria, and the results of such comparisons conform to the net impression created by the advertisement.

[Guide 3]

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§ 255.4 Endorsements by organizations.

Endorsements by organizations, especially expert ones, are viewed as rep-

resenting the judgment of a group whose collective experience exceeds that of any individual member, and whose judgments are generally free of the sort of subjective factors which vary from individual to individual. Therefore an organization’s endorsement must be reached by a process sufficient to ensure that the endorsement fairly reflects the collective judgment of the organization. Moreover, if an organization is represented as being expert, then, in conjunction with a proper exercise of its expertise in evaluating the product under § 255.3 of this part (Expert endorsements), it must utilize an expert or experts recognized as such by the organization or standards previously adopted by the organization and suitable for judging the relevant merits of such products.

Example: A mattress seller advertises that its product is endorsed by a chiropractic association. Since the association would be regarded as expert with respect to judging mattresses, its endorsement must be supported by an expert evaluation by an expert or experts recognized as such by the organization, or by compliance with standards previously adopted by the organization and aimed at measuring the performance of mattresses in general and not designed with the particular attributes of the advertised mattress in mind. (See also § 255.3, Example 5.)

[Guide 4]

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§ 255.5 Disclosure of material connections.

When there exists a connection between the endorser and the seller of the advertised product which might materially affect the weight or credibility of the endorsement (i.e., the connection is not reasonably expected by the audience) such connection must be fully disclosed. An example of a connection that is ordinarily expected by viewers and need not be disclosed is the payment or promise of payment to an endorser who is an expert or well known personality, as long as the advertiser does not represent that the endorsement was given without compensation. However, when the endorser is neither represented in the advertisement as an expert nor is known to a significant portion of the viewing public, then the advertiser should clearly